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ON PAGE A12

NEW YORK TIMES
5 February 1987

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Contra Says C.I.A. Supply Program Is Flawed

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 4 — A Nicaraguan rebel leader complained today that the Central Intelligence Agency program to deliver military supplies to the contras was not working properly.

The rebel leader, Adolfo Calero, said that although the situation was improving, there had been "problems with transport equipment which we got, mechanical defects that have to be fixed."

He said the difficulties could be resolved "any day now," but added, "In the meantime, we are using our old airplanes."

At a news conference, Mr. Calero also denied that he or other contra leaders controlled or had access to any bank accounts in Switzerland or the Cayman Islands. A Senate intelligence committee report last week said that such accounts were used to funnel profits from arms sales to Iran to the contras. The report indicated that Mr. Calero may have controlled three of the accounts himself.

Millions of dollars placed in those bank accounts are missing.

Senate Report Disputed

Mr. Calero said he never thanked Lieut. Col. Oliver L. North, the former National Security Council aide, for any diversion of funds from Iran to those accounts. The Senate report said contra leaders had been "appreciative." But Mr. Calero said, "I can't have expressed appreciation for money we haven't received."

Disputing another assertion in the Senate report, Mr. Calero said, "Mr. North never told me that we would get funds from Iran, from Israel or from any other place."

Asked about reports that Arturo Cruz, a key civilian contra leader, intended to resign from the United Nicaraguan Opposition, the rebel coalition, Mr. Calero said he would not comment "until I hear Arturo Cruz speak him-

self." The resignation threat stems from intense infighting within the coalition, which Mr. Cruz reportedly contends is unfairly dominated by the leaders of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force, the rebel army headed by Mr. Calero.

Some Equipment Is Denied

Contra leaders have been unhappy since the C.I.A. resumed supplying the rebels with military equipment last fall because they believe the agency has parceled out the equipment too slowly, according to Administration officials familiar with the program.

The agency has refused to give the contras much heavy or sophisticated equipment, such as trucks and surface-to-air missiles. One reason is that Congress has an opportunity later this month to rescind \$40 million of the \$100 million in aid approved last year. That is not likely to happen, most Administration officials contend. But if that aid is rescinded, the agency has concluded, the contras probably could not maintain or make good use of the equipment.

Mr. Calero said that the rebels had been given some surface-to-air missiles since the resupply operation began, but that more were needed. He said his troops also needed machine guns, mortars, grenade launchers, light antitank weapons, rifles and ammunition. More cargo planes and helicopters for medical evacuation and transport were needed as well, he said.

Despite that, Mr. Calero said that 6,000 rebel troops had penetrated deep inside Nicaragua and had encountered only minimal resistance from the far larger Sandinista army. In December,

American officials said almost none of the contra troops were inside Nicaragua because the Sandinista army had effectively blocked them from crossing the Honduran border. Now, Mr. Calero asserted, his forces are facing "only random resistance from the Sandinista forces, and only 300 men have been forced back to the border."

Members of Congress and others have said the contras will have to make significant military gains if they expect to get any more American aid.

Despite the reports about the diversion of profits from arms sales to Iran to the contras, and the supply of tens of millions of dollars by Saudi Arabia and Brunei, Mr. Calero said the contras got only \$1 million last year in addition to the \$27 million for nonlethal supplies given by the United States.